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ONE IN CHRIST, UNITED IN MISSION

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV FOR THE 100TH WORLD MISSION SUNDAY DAY



As we reflect on being one in *Christ* and united in mission, let us allow ourselves to be guided and inspired by divine grace, “to renew in ourselves the fire of our missionary vocation” and advance together in the commitment to evangelization, in this “new missionary age” in the history of the Church.

Dear brothers and sisters,

For World Mission Day 2026, which marks the centenary of a celebration established by Pius XI that is very dear to the Church, I have chosen the theme “One in Christ, united in mission.” Following the Jubilee Year, I wish to encourage the whole Church to continue its missionary journey with joy and zeal in the Holy Spirit. This requires hearts united in Christ, reconciled communities and, in everyone, a willingness to cooperate with generosity and trust.

As we reflect on being *one in Christ* and *united in mission*, let us allow ourselves to be guided and inspired by divine grace, “to renew in ourselves the fire of our missionary vocation” and advance together in the commitment to evangelization, in this “new missionary age” in the history of the Church (Homily, *Jubilee of the Missionary World and of Migrants*, 5 October 2025).

1. One in Christ – Missionary disciples united in him and with our brothers and sisters

The mystery of union with Christ lies at the heart of mission. Before his Pas-

sion, Jesus prayed to the Father, “that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us” (Jn 17:21). These words reveal Jesus’ deepest desire, as well as the identity of the Church as a community of his disciples. That is, a communion that flows from the Trinity, and continues to be sustained by the Trinity. A communion at the service of fraternity among all human beings and harmony with all creation.

Being a Christian is not primarily about practices or ideas; it is a life in union with Christ, in which we share in his filial relationship with the Father in the Holy Spirit. It means abiding in Christ, like branches on the vine (cf. Jn 15:4), immersed in the life of the Trinity. This union gives rise to mutual communion among believers and is the source of all missionary fruitfulness. Indeed, just as Saint John Paul II taught, “communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission” (Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, 32).

In this context, the Church’s primary missionary responsibility is to renew and sustain spiritual and fraternal unity

among its members. In many situations, we encounter conflicts, polarization, misunderstandings and a lack of mutual trust. When this occurs even within our communities, it undermines our witness. The evangelizing mission that Christ entrusted to his disciples requires, above all, hearts that are reconciled and eager for communion. Consequently, it is important to intensify ecumenical efforts with all Christian Churches, building upon the opportunities arising from the joint celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea.

Last but not least, being “one in Christ” calls us to keep our gaze fixed on the Lord, so that he may truly be at the center of our lives and communities, the center of every word, action and interpersonal relationship, leading us to say with amazement: “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). By constantly listening to his word and through the grace of the Sacraments, it will be possible for us to become living stones in the Church. Today, the Church is called to take up the fundamental themes of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent Papal

Magisterium, in particular that of Pope Francis. In fact, as Saint Paul says, “we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord” (2 Cor 4:5). For this reason, I reiterate the words of Saint Paul VI: “There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed” (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 22). This process of genuine evangelization begins in the heart of every Christian in order to reach all of humanity.

Therefore, the more united we are in Christ, the better able we will be to carry out together the mission that he entrusts to us.

2. United in mission – That the world may believe in Christ the Lord

The unity of disciples is not an end in itself; it is directed towards mission. Jesus states this clearly: “So that the world may believe that you have sent me” (Jn 17:21). It is through the witness of a reconciled, fraternal and united community that the proclamation of the Gospel acquires its full communicative power.

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EDITORIAL



WE MUST PROCLAIM JESUS CHRIST!

As the Syro-Malabar Church prepares to observe the entire month of October as Mission Month, this is an opportune time to rediscover the very heart of our missionary vocation. Proclaiming the Gospel is not merely one among the many activities of the Church; it belongs to her very identity. Therefore, every baptized believer is a participant in the missionary mandate of the Church.

In his message for World Mission Day 2026, the Holy Father Pope Leo XIV, quoting the great missionary St. Paul, reminds us: "We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord" (cf. 2 Cor. 4:5). Wherever the name, teaching, life, promises, Kingdom and mystery of Jesus are not proclaimed, there can be no authentic evangelization. The driving force of our missionary activity, therefore, is not an institution, an ideology or a programme, but Jesus Christ himself.

This conviction is all the more relevant in today's world. We must respect everyone and engage in dialogue with people of different faiths and cultures. Yet, in the name of dialogue, the Church cannot conceal Jesus or compromise the truth of the Gospel. Diluting the essence of the Gospel message in public forums or elsewhere in order to please the wealthy, the influential or those in authorities is incompatible with Christian witness. For, the Gospel speaks the same truth to the poor and the rich, to the weak and the powerful.

Love is the soul of mission. Genuine love does not conceal the truth. Mission does not mean imposing our faith upon anyone. Rather, while respecting the freedom and dignity of every person, it means bearing witness to the Christ whom we have encountered, through our words, our lives and our loving service.

Our parishes and families, seminaries and religious communities, educational and social institutions must become centres of missionary vitality. In the circular establishing October as Mission Month, the Major Archbishop, Father and Head of our Church, has called upon every parish and every member of the faithful to rediscover their own missionary responsibility. When we share our time, talents and resources for the mission of the Gospel, the missionary life of the Church becomes ever more vibrant.

Mission Month therefore places before us a fundamental question: Is Jesus Christ truly at the centre of our lives and of all the activities of the Church? Jesus Christ is the greatest treasure the Church has to offer the world. Without mixing our own interests with the integrity of his Gospel, let us proclaim with love, humility and courage: "There is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

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A DAY TO REMEMBER

October 1: St. Thérèse of Child Jesus; St. Remigius
Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Mar Thomas
Thuruthimattam CST (2006) and Bishop Mar Jacob
Muricken (2012)

October 2: The Guardian Angels

October 4: St. Francis of Assisi, Episcopal Ordination of
Bishop Mar Dominic Kokkat (1984)

October 6: Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Mar Joseph
Kunnath CMI (1999)

October 7: Our Lady of the Rosary

October 9: Death of Servant of God Mar Mathew
Kavukattu (1969)

Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Mar Joseph Srampickal
(2016), Bishop Mar Joseph Kollamparampil (2022), and
Bishop Mar Thomas Padiyath (2022)

October 15: St. Teresa of Avila

October 16: Blessed Thevarparampil Kunjathan

October 17: St. Ignatius of Antioch

October 18: St. Luke the Evangelist

Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Mar Antony Kariyil
CMI (2015), Mission Sunday

October 22: St. John Paul II

Episcopal Ordination of Archbishop Mar John
Vadakil MST (2009)

October 24: Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Mar
Ephrem Nariculam (2014)

October 25: Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Mar
Joseph Arumachadath MCBS (2007)

Episcopal Ordination Mar Joseph Thachaparambath
CMI (2025)

October 28: Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles
Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Mar Joseph
Pandarasseril (2006)

October 29: Episcopal Ordination of Archbishop
Mar Prince Antony Panengadan (2015)

October 1



Bishop Mar Remigiose
Inchananiyil

FESTAL GREETINGS

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE



Rev. Dr. Alex Sebastian Kollamkalam

There are no clear historical records concerning the early life of Cyprian, who was born in Carthage around the year 200. Some historical sources indicate that he was born to wealthy pagan parents and was a distinguished orator. Cyprian began his professional career as a teacher of rhetoric. St. Jerome testifies that, through the influence of a priest named Caecilius, he embraced the Christian faith and distributed all his wealth among the poor (*De Viris Illustribus* 67). Having chosen a life of celibacy while still a catechumen, he was baptised around the year 246 and became a Christian. Not long after embracing the Christian faith, he was appointed Bishop of Carthage, either towards the end of 248 or at the beginning of 249.

Following the persecution of Emperor Decius, Cyprian fled Carthage in 250, but returned to his eparchy the following year as the intensity of the persecution had diminished. He presided over the Council of Bishops held in 251, which decided, among other matters, that those who had renounced the faith out of fear of persecution could be reconciled with the Church only on their deathbed, while even those who had obtained



certificates of sacrifice by paying money, without actually renouncing the faith, could be recognised as official members of the Church only after undergoing a prolonged period of penance. In 254, a dispute arose between Cyprian and Stephen, the Bishop of Rome, concerning the readmission of those who had apostatised from the faith into the Church. The African bishops, under the leadership of Cyprian, opposed the decision of the Bishop of Rome to readmit bishops who had renounced the faith into the Church. Later, against the background of Bishop Stephen's decision that baptism administered by heretics is valid when performed in the name of the Holy Trinity, Cyprian convened three African episcopal synods between 255 and 256. The councils unanimously decided that, just as there is no true faith or salvation outside the Church, baptism administered outside the Church is also invalid. It is evident that Cyprian's convictions, such as "those who do not accept the Church as their mother cannot

have God as their Father," "the Church is the communion of the people of God united with the bishop," and "the unity of the Church is manifested in the unity of bishops filled with the Holy Spirit," influenced the decisions of the councils. On the basis of the view that "there is no salvation outside the Church," Cyprian compared the Church to "Noah's Ark" and had already gained wide recognition in the universal Church. The testimony of St. Jerome, "His writings are as clear and evident as the sun, so there is no need to draw up a list of them" (*De Viris Illustribus* 67), is evidence of his renown.

During the persecution under Emperor Valerian in 257, Cyprian was exiled to Curubis by the proconsul Paternus. In 258, Paternus' successor Galerius ordered him to return to Carthage and sentenced him to death because he refused to offer sacrifice to pagan gods. Beheaded on September 14, 258, he is acclaimed as the first martyr among the African bishops.

CIRCULAR OBSERVANCE OF OCTOBER AS MISSION MONTH

**Raphael Thattil the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church to the Archbishops, Bishops, Priests,
Consecrated Men and Women and Lay Faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church.
May the grace of the Lord be with you all!**

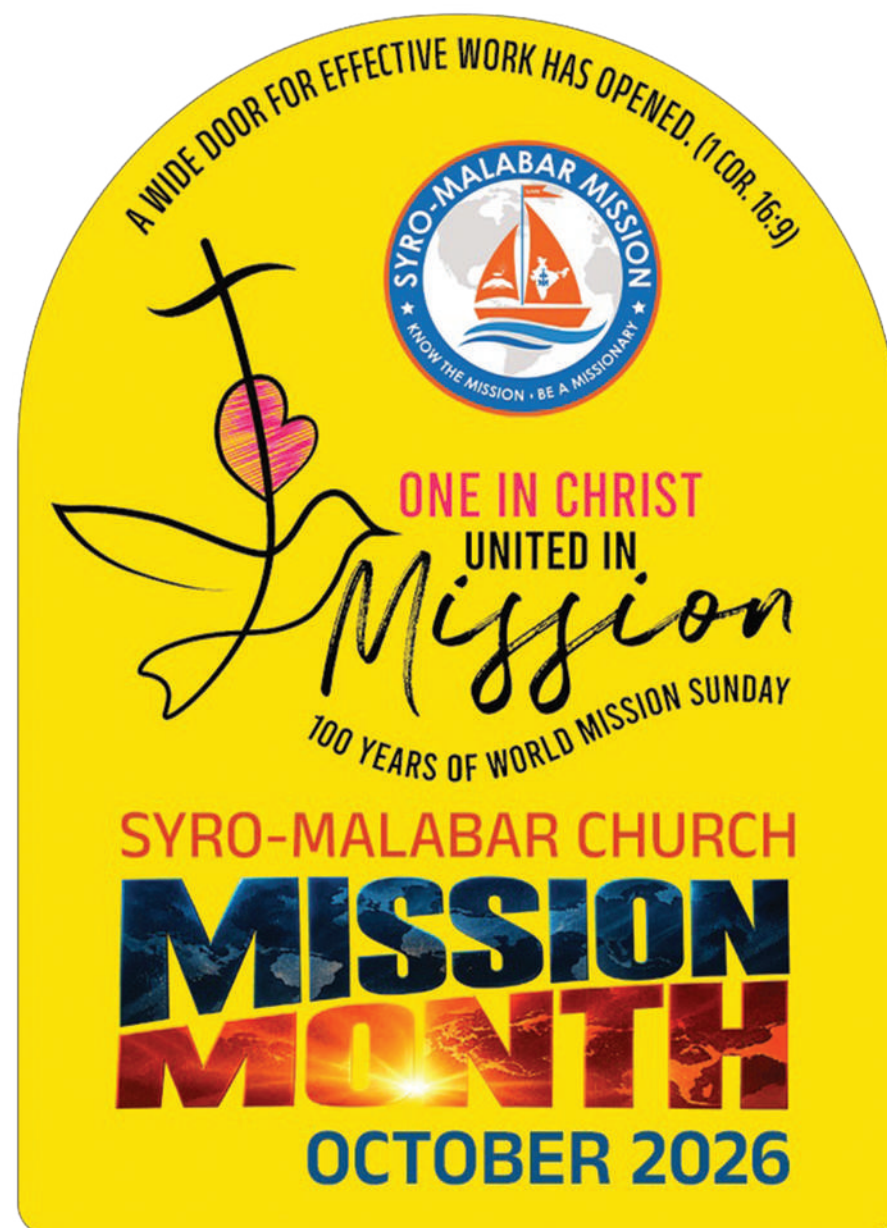
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The observance of Mission Sunday in the universal Catholic Church was initiated by Pope Pius XI. In 1926, he designated the penultimate Sunday of October as Mission Sunday, with the aim of deepening the faithful's awareness of the missionary mandate of the Church and encouraging them to support missionary activity through prayer and financial contributions. In his encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae*, published in 1926, he placed special emphasis on the growth of the missions and the expansion of the Church. The Mission Sunday has since developed into an annual observance reminding all the faithful that they are partners in the Church's universal mission.

Along with the universal observance of Mission Sunday in October, the Syro-Malabar Church has, since 2016, celebrated Mission Week from the Feast of *Denha* until 12 January, with the aim of fostering missionary consciousness among the faithful. Since this observance did not produce the desired results for various reasons, the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church, following the recommendation of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly held at Pala in 2024, has decided to observe the entire month of October as Mission Month replacing the Mission Week in January. Accordingly, from 2026 onwards, the month of October is hereby established as Mission Month in the Syro-Malabar Church. The coordination of the observance of Mission Month is entrusted with the Syro-Malabar Mission (SyMM) at Mount St Thomas, Kakkannad.

The Second Vatican Council reminded us that the Church is missionary by her very nature. Evangelization is not merely the principal mission of the Church but belongs to her very identity; indeed, the Church exists in order to evangelize (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14, 16). Therefore, every baptized believer is called to participate in the missionary mandate of the Church. We gratefully remember the bishops, priests, consecrated persons and lay missionaries who have dedicated their lives to the proclamation of the Gospel and continue to serve in various parts of the world. Even in these times, when circumstances are becoming increasingly unfavourable to missionary activity, let us never neglect or undermine the mission entrusted to us by the Lord Jesus Christ.

We gratefully remember the pioneering missionaries from other Churches who helped us to grow in faith. We thank God that, in the course of time, our Church has been blessed with numerous priestly and consecrated vocations and that our priests and consecrated persons have gone forth with missionary



zeal to proclaim the Gospel and render their service in India and throughout the world. Likewise, the bishops, priests and consecrated persons, hailing from the Syro-Malabar Church, serve in the dioceses and consecrated communities of other Churches in India and around the world elsewhere for the proclamation of the Gospel, are a source of pride for our Church. It is also worthy of special mention that members of the Syro-Malabar Church are actively involved in lay movements dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel. But, let us always remember that missionary service is our duty, not merely an act of charity from our side.

The observance of mission month that we are now beginning is intended to inspire eparchies, parishes, families and individuals to know, understand and support the various dimensions of evangelization and missionary activity. Accordingly, the four weeks of this month will focus on missionary activity at four distinct levels.

During the first week of October, efforts should be made to learn about and introduce the missionary activities of the universal Church. The second week

should be devoted to studying the missionary activities of the Syro-Malabar Church and identifying ways of participating in them. During the third week, the faithful should become acquainted with and support the missionary activities undertaken by the respective eparchies. In the fourth week, special attention should be given to recognizing the missionary responsibility of every parish and every believer and to coordinating various missionary initiatives at the parish level.

In addition, special prayers should be offered for the missions in parishes, family units and families throughout Mission Month. During the recital of the rosary and the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana*, we have to pray in a special way for the missionaries serving throughout the world and those who endure persecution and even death for witnessing the faith. Sunday homilies, faith-formation classes, the sharing of missionary experiences, the *Mission Quest* quiz competition, missionary skits and short films should be organized and coordinated in ways that foster missionary zeal among children, young people and adults. It would also be especially commendable to iden-

tify and bring together, at the eparchial level, laypeople engaged in new evangelization initiatives and to encourage and honour those involved in missionary service.

As communicated earlier, an official lay missionary movement named *Jeevan Jyothi* has been established in our Church. *Jeevan Jyothi* should be introduced and made active in all our eparchies and even in parishes, according to their respective circumstances. It would be appropriate to bring together the lay missionaries engaged in the field of evangelization during mission month and to inaugurate the activities of *Jeevan Jyothi*. It is our hope that, by strengthening this lay movement, a renewed missionary orientation will grow and flourish throughout the Syro-Malabar Church.

More detailed action plan and practical guidelines for the observance of this month will be provided by the Syro-Malabar Mission Office, which has been entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating mission month. I exhort all of you to observe the mission month with vitality and effectiveness by ensuring the active participation and cooperation of all.

Beloved brothers and sisters, the proclamation of the Gospel and missionary activity constitute the very soul of the Church. It is our duty to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. Not only parishes, eparchies, seminaries and consecrated communities, but every baptized believer must recognize and embrace his or her missionary identity. I invite you to learn more about the missionary activities carried out by our Church in India and throughout the world, to pray for them and to participate actively in them to the extent possible. When we generously share our time, talents and resources, the evangelizing mission of the Church becomes stronger and more vibrant. In this way, the love and blessings we have received from Lord Jesus Christ will become a light in the lives of others. May the observance of mission month pave the way for a renewed missionary awakening in our Church as we prepare for the Great Jubilee of Redemption in 2033!

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, the first missionary, together with the Apostles, martyrs, missionaries and all the saints, be our guiding light on this missionary journey! I impart to you all my prayerful blessing!

Given from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malabar Church at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad, on 10 September 2026.

✠ **Raphael Thattil**

Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

JEEVAN JYOTHI: A NEW LIGHT FOR THE MISSION

As the Syro-Malabar Church observes the month of October as Mission Month, this article introduces Jeevan Jyothi, the official lay missionary initiative recently launched in the Church, and explains its objectives.



Shaji Parampan

Introduction

During His public ministry, Christ the Lord chose disciples and sent them forth to proclaim the Gospel: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). To the Church He entrusted the duty of spreading faith and His saving work. Flowing from Christ into the members of His mystical body, this mission becomes our way of life.

"The Gospel must reach to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). For this, each one of us is called. St. Paul the Apostle, recognizing this truth, declared: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16). This mandate is not limited to Paul alone, but extends to every Christian.

The Second Vatican Council, in its decree *Ad Gentes* (Nr. 35) on the missionary activity of the Church, affirms: "The whole Church is missionary." Thus, the children of the Church bear the responsibility of bringing the Gospel to peoples who have not yet heard it and into non-Christian cultures.

This truth is beautifully expressed in the prayer at baptism: "Blessed be God who has raised you to the dignity of His children through baptism. May He help you to live as a faithful son/daughter of the holy Church. Having received the Holy Spirit, may you always be a courageous witness to the Gospel." Recognizing this call, many missionary initiatives have arisen among the SyroMalabar faithful, who live for the Gospel and engage actively in missionary works. In various parts of India, the laity carries forward these evangelizing activities.

To rekindle missionary zeal among the globally dispersed faithful of the SyroMalabar Catholic Church, the Jeevan Jyothi Lay Missionary Movement was established. The proposal for an official lay missionary movement was first raised at the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly in August 2024. After careful reflection and discussion, the Synod of Bishops approved the proposal in January 2025. In January 2026, the Synod officially confirmed the name *Jeevan Jyothi*. On January 26, 2026, at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad, the Major Archbishop of the SyroMalabar Church, Mar Raphael Thattil, formally inaugurated the movement. At this inaugural gathering, Mar Prince Antony Panengadan, Chairman of the Commission for Evangelization and the Pastoral Care of the Migrants, and Rev. Fr. Francis Eluvathingal, Secretary of the same Commission led the programme.



Biblical Foundation of the Name Jeevan Jyothi

The name *Jeevan Jyothi* (Light of Life) is drawn from John 1:4-5: "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." This verse beautifully reflects the essence of the movement.

Christ is the source of life and the light of the world. His disciples are called to radiate this light into every dimension of life. Through His incarnation, death, and resurrection, Jesus sustains creation and renews humanity. He offers not mere existence, but abundant and eternal life: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). To live in Him means to walk in His light, to reflect His holiness, and to become "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14-16).

In Christ we find union with God, freedom from sin, and the hope of eternity. The darkness of sin and death is conquered by the radiant light of Jesus. As the One who is both Life and Light, Christ guides and sustains the missionary journey of the Church. With His light, the *Jeevan Jyothi* Lay Missionary Movement seeks to embrace and embody this radiance, enabling the laity to witness to Christ and to shine forth His life amidst the challenges of the modern world.

Rooted deeply in the apostolic tradition of St. Thomas the Apostle, the movement strives to rekindle missionary zeal among the SyroMalabar faithful worldwide. It empowers believers to live and proclaim the Gospel in the ordinary circumstances of daily life. It also seeks to provide awareness of missionary realities, to inspire the faithful through the experiences of missionaries, and to help those unable to visit mission territories understand the life and struggles of mis-

sionaries serving in distant lands and among non-Christians.

The logo of the Jeevan Jyothi Lay Missionary Movement

It beautifully integrates five core commitments: constant intercessory prayer, witness through daily life, person-to-person evangelization, and fearless proclamation from the rooftops, and humble service expressed in the washing of feet. In this way, the Church desires that our lives become a Gospel message in every sphere of engagement, a ministry of establishing the Kingdom of God.

Vision and Mission of the Movement

Vision: Live Christ and radiate His Light.

Mission: With deep conviction that the entire baptized are sent out as missionaries, the mission unfolds through the following commitments:

I. Evangelization in Action with Global Missionary Spirit: We commit to proclaiming the Gospel through prayer, witness, person-to-person sharing, bold proclamation, and humble service, while nurturing a missionary spirit among the globally dispersed laity of the Syro-Malabar Church.

II. Daily Life Rooted in Christ and Witness: We emphasize a Catholic life rooted in Christ and Scripture and we inspire the laity to witness to Christ in every sphere of life—workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, digital platforms, culture, and society, seriously involving in the social and charitable activities of the Church.

III. *Missio Ad Gentes* and Missionary Transformation: We embrace new means of evangelization with a special focus on *missio ad gentes*, fostering leadership and fellowship among lay persons—youth, professionals, and retired

faithful transforming them into vibrant missionaries.

IV. Ecclesial Participation and Missionary Vocations: To empower the lay faithful to assume meaningful roles within the Church's pastoral plan, engaging actively in re-evangelization across eparchies, parishes, and missions, while at the same time promoting vocations among seminarians, candidates for religious life, catechists, and lay preachers—especially for mission territories.

V. Guidance, Fellowship & Resource Support: We animate and strengthen zealous missionaries through formation, encouragement, and recognition, while finding sponsors to provide financial and material support for missionary personnel, centers, formation houses, and essential infrastructure.

Key Characteristics of the Movement

I. Firm Faith in the Holy Trinity – Holding unwavering conviction in God the Trinity – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – as the source of salvation.

II. Personal Encounter with the Person of Christ – Having a deep, living relationship with Jesus and walking in daily obedience to His teachings within the Church, as the foundation of missionary life.

III. With the Church – Dedicating oneself to the Church with steadfast commitment and supporting its multifaceted evangelizing mission.

IV. Life of Proclamation – Proclaiming the Gospel through words and deeds, even at the cost of life.

V. Salvation of Souls – Seeking one's own sanctification while striving for the salvation of others.

Charisms and Ministries of the Jeevan Jyothi Lay Missionary Movement

A charism is a grace freely given by the Holy Spirit to an individual or group for the benefit of others and for the mission of the Church. A ministry, on the other hand, is a structured service or office within the Church, recognized, entrusted, or appointed, through which charisms and talents are put into practice.

Though ministries differ in function, they are united in mission. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 873, 910) affirms that the laity are called to exercise ministries in family, workplace, parish, and society. Through the Jeevan Jyothi Lay Missionary Movement, the Syro-Malabar Church organizes and animates lay missionaries according to their diverse charisms and recognized ministries.

The Church carries a tradition of 2000 years. Our Syro-Malabar Church, heir to this long heritage, must now focus more deeply on missionary activity. Each of us is appointed in this era to announce to the world the joyful Good News of Jesus. By our words, deeds, and life witness, we are called to share Christ and advance as missionaries of the 21st century. ■

Continuation of page 1



If unity is the condition of mission, love is its essence. The Good News that we are sent to proclaim to the world is not an abstract ideal; it is the Gospel of God's faithful love, which became flesh in the face and life of Jesus Christ.

From this perspective, it is worth recalling the motto of Blessed Paolo Manna, "The entire Church for the conversion of the whole world," which succinctly expresses the ideal that inspired the establishment of the *Pontifical Missionary Union* in 1916. On its 110th anniversary, I convey my gratitude and my blessing for its commitment to inspiring and forming the missionary spirit of priests, consecrated persons and lay faithful, promoting the unity of all evangelizing efforts. In fact, no baptized person is exempt from or indifferent to mission: everyone, each according to their own vocation and condition of life, participates in the great work that Christ has entrusted to his Church. As Pope Francis repeatedly reminded us, proclaiming the Gospel is an action that is always harmonious, communal and synodal.

For this reason, unity in mission means safeguarding and nurturing the spirituality of communion and missionary cooperation. By daily fostering this attitude, divine grace gradually teaches us to see our brothers and sisters through the eyes of faith. We also learn to recognize joyfully the good that the Spirit inspires in each person, to embrace diversity as a treasure, to bear one another's burdens and always to seek the unity that comes from above. Indeed, we all share in one mission in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (*Eph* 4:5-6). This spirituality constitutes the daily expression of missionary discipleship. It helps us to recover a universal vision of the Church's evangelizing mission, and to overcome a lack of coordinated efforts and the creation of factions among the followers of the one Lord — such as "I belong to Paul," "I to Apollos" (*cf. 1 Cor* 1:10-12).

Needless to say, missionary unity should not be understood as uniformity, but rather as the convergence of different charisms for the same purpose, namely to make Christ's love visible and to invite everyone to encounter him. Evangelization is achieved when local communities cooperate with one another and when cultural, spiritual and liturgical differences are fully and harmoniously expressed in the same faith. I therefore encourage all institutions in the Church to strengthen their sense of ecclesial missionary communion and to develop creative and concrete ways of cooperating with one another for and in the mission.

In this regard, I would like to thank the *Pontifical Mission Societies* for their service to missionary cooperation, which I experienced with gratitude during my ministry in Peru. These Societies — *Propagation of the Faith*, *Holy Childhood*, *Saint Peter the Apostle*, *Saint Peter the Apostle* and *Pontifical Missionary Union* — continue to nurture and form missionary awareness for the faithful of all ages, and to promote a network of prayer and charity that connects communities throughout the world. Here, it is worth noting that the founder of the *Society of the Propagation of the Faith*, Blessed Pauline Marie Jaricot, established the Living Rosary two hundred years ago. Even today it continues to bring together many of the faithful throughout the world to pray for every spiritual and missionary need. It is also worth remembering that, following a proposal from the *Society of the Propagation of the Faith*, Pius XI established World Mission Day in 1926. The annual offerings collected on this day are distributed by the Society, on behalf of the Pope, to support the various needs of the Church's mission. The four Societies, therefore, as a whole and each in its

own specificity, still play a valuable role for the entire Church. They are a living sign of unity and ecclesial missionary communion. I invite everyone to work with them in a spirit of gratitude.

3. Mission to love – Proclaiming, living and sharing God's faithful love

If unity is the condition of mission, love is its essence. The Good News that we are sent to proclaim to the world is not an abstract ideal; it is the Gospel of God's faithful love, which became flesh in the face and life of Jesus Christ.

The mission of the disciples and the Church as a whole is to continue the mission of Christ in the Holy Spirit: a mission born of love, lived in love, and leading to love. In fact, the Lord himself, in his great prayer to the Father before his Passion, after invoking unity among his disciples, concludes: "so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them" (*Jn* 17:26). Impelled by the love of Christ, the Apostles then went out to evangelize for Christ (*cf. 2 Cor* 5:14). In the same way, throughout the centuries, multitudes of Christians — martyrs, confessors and missionaries — have given their lives to make this divine love known to the world. Thus, guided by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love, the Church's evangelizing mission will continue until the end of time.

I would like to express my special gratitude to today's *ad gentes* missionaries. Like Saint Francis Xavier, they have left their homeland, their families and all sense of security in order to proclaim the Gospel and bring Christ and his love to places that are often challenging, poor, conflict-ridden or culturally distant. Despite adversity and human limitations, they continue to give themselves joyfully, because they know that Christ himself, and his

Gospel, are the greatest treasures we can offer. Through their perseverance, they demonstrate that God's love transcends all barriers. The world still needs these courageous witnesses of Christ, and ecclesial communities still need new missionary vocations. We must always keep them close to our hearts and continually pray to the Father for them. May he grant us the gift of young people and adults who are willing to leave everything behind to follow Christ on the path of evangelization even to the ends of the earth!

Filled with admiration for men and women missionaries, I make a special appeal to the whole Church to join them in the mission of evangelization through the witness of our lives in Christ, through prayer and through our contributions to the missions. As Saint Francis of Assisi said, "Love is not loved," and we look to him in a special way on the eight hundredth anniversary of his passing to heaven. Let us find inspiration in his desire to live in the love of the Lord and to transmit it to those both near and far, because, as he said, "this love Who hath loved us much is much to be loved" (Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, *The Life of Saint Francis*, chap. IX, 1; *Fonti Francescane*, 1161). Let us also draw inspiration from the zeal of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who declared that she would continue her mission even after death: "I shall desire in heaven the same thing as I do now on earth: to love Jesus and to make him loved" (*Letter 220 to l'Abbé Bellière*, 24 February 1897).

Inspired by these testimonies, let us all commit to contributing to the great mission of evangelization — which is always a work of love — according to our own vocation and the gifts we have received. Your prayers and practical support, particularly on World Mission Day, will be a great help in bringing the Gospel of God's love to everyone, especially the poorest and those most in need. Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion. I renew my heartfelt gratitude "for everything you will do to help me help missionaries throughout the world" (*Video Message for World Mission Day 2025*, 19 October 2025). To foster spiritual communion, I give you my blessing with this simple prayer:

Holy Father, make us one in Christ, rooted in his love that unites and renews. May all members of the Church be united in mission, docile to the Holy Spirit, courageous in bearing witness to the Gospel, proclaiming and daily embodying your faithful love for all creatures.

Bless all missionary men and women, support them in their efforts, and watch over them in hope!

Mary, Queen of Missions, accompany our work of evangelization in every corner of the earth: make us instruments of peace, and grant that the whole world may recognize in Christ the light that saves. Amen. ■

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS FOR THE DISTRIBUTION HOLY COMMUNION



CANON LAW

Rev. Dr. Joshy Kulathumkal

The Second Vatican Council teaches us that the Divine Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” Therefore, the Church regulates with great care the ministries associated with the celebration and distribution of the Divine Eucharist. Ordinarily, the ministry of distributing Divine Eucharist belongs to those who have received Holy Orders. However, in certain pastoral circumstances and when there is a genuine need, the Church permits other members of the faithful to exercise this ministry. They are known as the Extraordinary Ministers of Divine Eucharist.

According to the law of the Latin Church (CIC), bishops, priests, and deacons are the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion (can. 910 §1, CIC). At the same time, an acolyte or another member of the Christian faithful who has been appointed in accordance with the norm of law (can. 230 §3 of CIC) is an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion (can. 910 §2 of CIC).

The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO) regulates this matter somewhat differently. According to can. 709 §1 of the CCEO, Divine Eucharist is to be distributed only by priests. A deacon may also distribute Divine Eucharist if the particular law of the respective Church *sui iuris* so provides. According to the Particular Law of



the Syro-Malabar Church, deacons are also ordinary ministers of Divine Eucharist. As regards other members of the faithful, the Synod of Bishops of the Church *sui iuris* may determine whether they may be entrusted with this ministry (can. 709 §2, CCEO).

On this basis, the Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church establishes specific norms concerning extraordinary ministers of Divine Eucharist. According to the Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church, the following categories of persons may be appointed as extraordinary ministers of Divine Eucharist:

1. Major seminarians who have received at least the minor order of *karoyusa*;
2. Any perpetually professed member of a non-clerical religious institute;
3. Lay people of good standing, generally acceptable to the parish priest and to the people.

A person does not automatically become qualified for this ministry merely because he or she is a Catholic. The person's participation in the life of the Church, moral conduct, public Christian witness, and acceptance among the faithful should also be taken into consideration.

Appointment as an extraordinary minister is not a permanent right to distribute Holy Communion; rather, it is a ministry entrusted to a person for a particular purpose in a determined period and according to the needs of the Church. When there are a sufficient number of priests available to distribute Divine Eucharist, extraordinary ministers should not be employed for this purpose. Likewise, only priests have the right to take and receive the Divine Eucharist by himself. The faithful are not permitted to take Holy Communion by themselves from the sacred vessels and consume it without receiving it from a minister.

The responsibility for appointing religious and lay faithful as extraordinary ministers rests with the eparchial bishop. The names of those who may be appointed for this ministry are to be submitted by the parish priests of the parishes where such a ministry is required, for the approval of the eparchial bishop. Once the necessary permission has been granted, the extraordinary ministers are to exercise their ministry according to the directions of the parish priest. They are also to distribute Divine Eucharist wearing the special but simple vestments approved by the eparchial bishop.

The handling and distribution of the Divine Eucharist is a ministry of great ecclesial significance. Therefore, the selection and formation of extraordinary ministers must be undertaken with particular care. Their formation should appropriately include instruction concerning a sound understanding of the Church's faith in the Divine Eucharist, basic knowledge of the Church's liturgy, the nature and character of the ministry of an extraordinary minister, and the proper manner of distributing the Divine Eucharist.

It is important to remember that an extraordinary minister is not merely a ‘practical assistant’. He or she is an ecclesial minister who, through personal life and service, manifests the Church's faith in and reverence for the Divine Eucharist. The purpose of this ministry is solely to assist the ordinary ministers in responding to genuine pastoral needs, always with the utmost reverence for the Most Divine Eucharist. ■

THE FAITHFUL ZEAL OF ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE WITNESSED IN THE ACTS OF THOMAS



LITURGICAL
RESEARCH
CENTRE STUDY
SERIES

Rev. Dr. James Puliurumpil

The faithful zeal of St Thomas the Apostle, standing before Mazdai, the king of the Tamil country, to be judged, is vividly portrayed in the *Acts of Thomas* in these words: “Then the people ran after them in order to set Thomas free. But the soldiers were with him, holding spears on either side. Then Thomas said: ‘Until the final moment of departure from this world, the mysteries are being fulfilled in me. You do not allow me to know the abundance of his grace or physical suffering. Behold, they surround me with weapons and fight against me unto death. Yet I have been given over for the sake of my Lord.’ One of the soldiers took Thomas by the hands and led him forward. Thomas said: ‘I await him. Let me receive him. Since our Lord is one, he was struck by the hands of one.’”



Then the Apostle encouraged the faithful: “When he climbed the mountain where he was destined to be

killed, he said to those who were holding him: ‘Listen to me, for my departure from this world is near. Do not allow

the eyes of your hearts to become blind. May your ears not become so closed that they can never hear. Believe in this God whom I proclaim. Do not act according to the hardness of your hearts. Instead, practise every virtue that gives life with God, human dignity and freedom.”

Then the Apostle said to Vizan: “Son of the earthly king Mazdai, servant of Jesus Christ, allow these servants to carry out the will of their king Mazdai. Let me go and pray.” In accordance with the king's request, the soldiers allowed Thomas to go. Thomas went and prayed thus: “My Lord, my God, my hope, my Saviour, my companion who guided me through all the lands I have crossed in your name, dwell with your servants. Lead me also to come to you. For I completely entrust my soul to you. No one shall take it away from your hands. May my sins not hinder me. Behold, by doing your will, I have become a slave for the freedom I receive today. Lord Jesus, grant it to me. Fulfil it in me. For I have no doubt whatsoever about your truth or your love. Yet I speak these words to you so that those standing around me may hear them.” ■

“THE BROTHERS OF JESUS” (MATTHEW 13:55)



EXPLORING BIBLE QUESTIONS

Rev. Dr. Joju Kokkattu

A tendency still exists today to misinterpret Matthew 1:25 and 13:55 and to teach that Mary had other children after the birth of Jesus, and that Matthew 13:55 refers to these children by name as James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude, who are described as the “brothers of Jesus.” However, when various passages from the Gospels are examined together, it becomes clear that the “brothers of Jesus” mentioned in Matthew 13:55 were not other children of Mary.

“He did not know her until she had given birth to a son” (Matthew 1:25)

The word “until” used here is the Greek word “heōs.” This word does not imply that Joseph and Mary continued a normal marital relationship after the birth of Jesus. The Greek word “heōs,” meaning “until,” indicates a specific pe-

riod of time, but it does not necessarily mean that the opposite situation occurred after that period. For example, in 2 Samuel 6:23 we read that Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child “until the day of her death.” Here, too, the Greek word “heōs” is used. This certainly does not mean that she had children after her death. Again, the word “heōs,” meaning “until,” is found in 1 Timothy 4:13: “Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading...” Therefore, the word “until” does not necessarily indicate that the opposite situation occurred after the specified period. Thus, in Matthew 1:25, the Evangelist Matthew establishes only that Joseph had no role in the conception and birth of Jesus.

When Matthew 13:55 is read carefully, it becomes clear that the expression “brothers of Jesus” does not mean that James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude were children of Mary. In this verse, Mary is explicitly identified as the mother of Jesus, while James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude are referred to as his brothers. This makes it clear that those described as the brothers of Jesus were not children of Mary.

Why, then, is the word “brothers” used?

The Greek word used here for “brother” is “adelphos.” Just as in the Malayalam language, the Greek word “adelphos” does not refer exclusively to brothers related by blood. It can also refer to close relatives, members of the same tribe, or people belonging to the same locality. In Genesis 13:8, Abraham says to Lot, “We are brothers,” although Lot was not Abraham’s actual brother. Rather, he was the son of Haran, Abraham’s brother. The Old Testament also uses the term “brother” for members of the same tribe, as seen in 2 Samuel 19:12-13, Numbers 8:26, Numbers 16:10, and Deuteronomy 18:2. Therefore, the mere use of the expression “brothers” in Matthew 13:55 does not establish that those referred to were brothers by blood.

Moreover, Matthew himself gives the name of the actual mother of James and Joseph mentioned in Matthew 13:55 in Matthew 27:56: “Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.” Therefore, the persons named in Matthew 13:55 were not children of Mary, and this is why no-

where in the Gospels are the brothers of Jesus explicitly described as children of Mary.

In John 19:25 we read: “Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.” When Matthew 13:55, Matthew 27:56, and John 19:25 are read together, it becomes clear that those known as the brothers of Jesus were not children of Mary, the mother of Jesus, but relatives belonging to the wider family.

In John 19:26-27, Jesus entrusts his mother to John. If those referred to as the brothers of Jesus had been children of Mary, it would be difficult to understand why Jesus would entrust his mother to John. Therefore, the expression “brothers of Jesus” found in the Gospels gives no indication whatsoever that these persons were children of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Therefore, it cannot be concluded, based solely on the expression “until she had given birth to a son” in Matthew 1:25 and the expression “brothers” in Matthew 13:55, that Mary had other children after the birth of Jesus.

TOGETHER WITH THE CHURCH, FOR FAMILIES

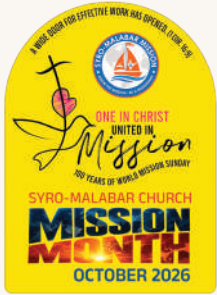
For more than half a century, the Apostolic Sisters of Mary Immaculate (ASMI) have been bringing Christ to the religious, social and cultural spheres of Kerala.

The Congregation of the Apostolic Sisters of Mary Immaculate, known as ASMI, were founded in response to the divine inspiration received through prayer by Cardinal Mar Antony Padiyara, who looked with deep concern upon families being tossed about by the turbulent currents of materialistic living conditions. The official beginning of the congregation was on September 21, 1974. The congregation works with the aim of renewing families, which are the foundation of the Church and the cradle of personal formation. ASMI has chosen the Mary Immaculate, who participated in the salvific plan of Christ through her total self-surrender, as its heavenly patroness. In collaboration with parishes, it works for the renewal of families, irrespective of caste or religion.

To bear witness to Christ throughout life is the vision of the Apostolic Sisters of Mary Immaculate. Through a total self-offering that touches every dimension of life, they share with individuals and families, through family apostolate, parish apostolate, education and healthcare, the salvific experience that flows from a life of imitation of Christ and union with God. In this way, the Apostolic Sisters of Mary Immaculate have undertaken the apostolic mission of bringing all people into communion with the Triune God. In keeping with the needs of the times, they also render services such as the care of persons with physical and mental disabilities, healthcare, home mission, social service, special schools for persons with disabilities, nursing care, palliative care, dispensaries and counseling.



The sisters are engaged in ministry in various eparchies of the Syro-Malabar Church, as well as in Germany and at the mission centres in Jaipur and Bijnor. The Generalate of the ASMI Congregation is situated at Cheeranchira, near Changanacherry. On December 8, 2004, the ASMI Congregation was elevated to the status of an eparchial congregation. The care, merciful love and providential intervention of God can be seen throughout the growth of the congregation. The members of the Apostolic Sisters of Mary Immaculate continue to give meaning through their lives to the exhortation of St Paul the Apostle: “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. 5:18). As the presence of Jesus, as a foretaste of heavenly life, as channels of divine power and as witnesses to the Gospel, the ASMI sisters are ever ready to reap a hundred-fold harvest.



Archbishop Mar Prince
Antony Panengadan

OCTOBER MISSION MONTH: A FOUR-WEEK JOURNEY

DISCOVERING THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF MISSION MONTH THROUGH WEEKLY THEMED REFLECTIONS IN OCTOBER

WEEK I

The Mission of the Universal Church

The nature of the Church is beautifully articulated in *Ad Gentes*, which teaches that the Church is missionary, springing forth from the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father. The Church continues Christ's mission of salvation, becoming both sign and instrument of God's kingdom in the world. "The Church exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14). Evangelization, the very essence of the Church's identity, is the sharing of the Good News of Jesus Christ through proclamation, witness, and service so that all may encounter Him. This mission extends to the whole world, and the Gospel is meant for all. In today's world, countless people are still waiting to hear the Gospel. Realizing this, every baptized person is called to be a witness. By using modern means of communication, they are to bring the light of Christ into the darkest corners of the world. Thus, the observance of this week seeks to awaken missionary consciousness.

WEEK II

The Focus of the Mission of the Syro-Malabar Church

In this second week, we reflect on how the universal mission of the Church is lived within the Syro-Malabar Church, in her own ritual identity. The Syro-Malabar Church does not possess a mission apart from that of the universal Church; rather, she fully participates in the one mission of Christ, expressed through her own ecclesial patrimony. Rooted in the missionary heritage of the Apostle Thomas, the Syro-Malabar missionary tradition embraces evangelization and migration with renewed seriousness. By faithfully living her ecclesial identity, the Syro-Malabar Church seeks to instill a profound sense of missionary responsibility across the globe, wherever she is permitted to spread the light of the Gospel. The observance of Mission Month is one of the many steps in this journey reminding the faithful that the Church's identity is missionary and that her witness must shine forth in every corner of the world. Thus, the mission lived by this *sui iuris* Church enriches and embellishes the mission of the universal Church.

WEEK III

Eparchial Mission Engagement

In the third week, we draw closer to the concrete reality of mission. The Eparchy becomes the place where the universal missionary vocation of the Church and the particular mission of the Syro-Malabar tradition take visible form in a specific territory and community. The decisive question for every Eparchy is: Who are the people whom God has entrusted to us? The answer embraces Catholics who are active in faith, those who have grown distant, young people and children, families and migrants, the poor and those on the margins, people who have never encountered Christ, people of other faiths, those who have lost faith, and the digital generation. In this way, the Eparchy moves from "mission in general" to "mission here," making the mission concrete in the lives of particular people and places entrusted to the care of each eparchy.

WEEK IV

Parish Mission Comprising Families and Individuals

The fourth week brings mission home, where it is lived concretely in the parish, the family, and in each baptized believer. The parish and the family become places where faith is lived, prayed, shared, and handed on, becoming true missionary presences. By its very nature, the parish is a missionary community, called not merely to preserve the faith of those already Christian but to reach out to everyone within its territory, making mission local and tangible. Participation in missionary projects, such as offering material help, dedicating time and energy, even adopting mission territories, are part of this journey. Each believer is invited to embrace personal responsibility for some mission work. Mission begins with small steps: a person-to-person conversation, a humble and sincere prayer, an act of service for one in real need, a touching testimony, an act of forgiveness, or even a single word about Jesus. Through the observance of Mission Month, parishes, families, and individuals are encouraged to shift their focus to practical steps in spreading the light of the Gospel in daily life. Ultimately, the lived experience of "we are sent" leads to the personal conviction "I am sent"—the climax of the missionary journey.

SYRO-MALABAR MISSION MONTH PRAYER

Loving Heavenly Father, the children of the Syro-Malabar Church across the globe are united in one mind during this Mission Month. Deepen in us the conviction that all who have received Baptism are sent as missionary disciples. Enable us to pray for the spread of the Gospel, to be witnesses of Christ, and to courageously share the Gospel with others. Through our proclamation, let all the people on earth know that you alone are the true God, the Father, and that you sent your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Bless the endeavors of the missionaries serving in the mission fields for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Call

forth many priests, religious, and laity to work with zeal in the mission regions. Bless us to work hard for the mission you have entrusted to us, so that we may be found worthy of the eternal crown. Amen.

Our Mother, Blessed Mary, Pray for us.

Our Father, Saint Thomas the Apostle, Pray for us.

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Patroness of the Missions, Pray for us.

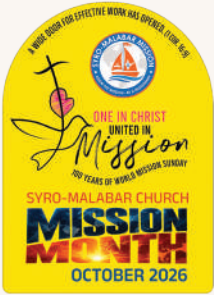
Saints and Blessed of our Church, Pray for us.

KAROZUZA PRAYER

During this Mission Month, we dedicate and pray for all mission territories, together with every priest, consecrated religious and lay missionary who serve in the work of evangelization. Grant us, who are sent through Baptism to go into

(Include in the Karozuza prayer of the Holy *Qurbana*)

all the world and proclaim the Gospel, the strength and courage needed to bear witness to Christ through our lives and actions. May the light of the Gospel shine through us and enter the hearts of all whom we encounter.



Fr. Francis
Eluvathingal

OCTOBER MISSION MONTH ACTION PLAN

CONCRETE ACTION PLAN TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE EPARCHIES AND PARISHES IN CONNECTION WITH THE OBSERVANCE OF OCTOBER MISSION MONTH

WEEK
I

Mission of the Universal Church

- 1) A video on the Mission Sunday theme of Pope Leo XIV and a Video on the Mission Month from the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church is made available to all.
- 2) Recommended to prepare a sharing of the testimony of one missionary from each Eparchy who is engaged in the mission work overseas and share to all.
- 3) Gift a Bible or be part of the BAI Project campaign that ensures all our countrymen get a Bible.
- 4) Recite the whole Rosary or at least a decade for the intentions of the world mission and missionaries.
- 5) Ask the children and youth to spare some money during October and share it for the mission.
- 6) Ensure that there is a team in the Eparchy and in the parish to carry out all the activities of the Mission Month.

WEEK
II

Syro-Malabar Mission Focus

- 1) One video on the Mission of the Syro-Malabar Church of the Commission Chairman and one video on the Action Plan by the Secretary of the commission.
- 2) Social media reels and short videos highlighting Syro-Malabar missionary initiatives shall be circulated.
- 3) Give formation to the elderly lay persons and encourage them for personal sharing of Christ workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods. Share testimonies of missionaries working in India during the parish gatherings and digital platforms.
- 4) Popularise on the Mission Quest and other Mission Projects of the Church to the People.
- 5) Plan a mission visit to the mission area of the Syro-Malabar Church or of the Eparchy and discuss how the missionary partnership could be strengthened.
- 6) Ask the whole parish especially the children and youth to do some sacrifices for the suffering and dying for the faith and mission.

WEEK
III

Eparchial Mission Engagement

- 1) World Mission Sunday Collection: October 18, 2026.
- 2) Video on the Mission Month and Jeevan Jyothi from the Eparchial Bishops to the faithful of the Eparchy
- 3) Conduct seminars, talks or classes on the missionary activities of the Syro-Malabar Church and of the Eparchy, especially on the Evangelisation and *missio ad gentes* and train lay volunteers through short workshops in person-to-person evangelization.
- 4) Inaugurate the Jeevan Jyothi in Eparchial level, gathering all the lay missionaries of the Eparchy, even if they are part of other missionary organization.
- 5) Prepare a missionary bank (old-present-future) of the personnel from the Priests, Religious and the Lay persons to strengthen the Eparchial Mission.
- 6) Ensure a clear mission adoption is done by the Eparchy with fidei donum concept of the universal church (Eparchy).

WEEK
IV

Parish Mission Mobilization

- 1) Invite missionaries (priests, sisters or lay persons) to share experiences in parish assemblies, youth sessions and catechism class rooms.
- 2) Honor parish level missionaries: priests, sisters or lay persons during Sunday liturgy.
- 3) Encourage missionary vocations among seminarians, catechists, and youth.
- 4) Organize parish annual retreats on missionary themes, emphasizing the call of every baptized to evangelize, if not the whole retreat, at least some talks.
- 5) Establish missionary diaries for parishioners to record daily acts of evangelization.
- 6) Organize a Holy Qurbana or a cultural event for the guest workers as a mission work of the parish.
- 7) Discuss in the higher bodies about the mission of the parish, either a parish mission inside the parish or partnering a mission in the mission territory (parishes).

Long Term Plans

- I. Launch a mission-friendly mobile app to share updates, testimonies, and needs of the mission.
- II. Encourage youth and children to create reels, podcasts, and blogs on missionary life and evangelization themes and promote respectful Gospel sharing in digital spaces by individuals and groups in different languages. The best reels or short film may be awarded on Missionary themes (from Bible, Apostolic times, saints, and the modern times (SyMM office and Eparchies).
- III. Prepare documentaries of missionary models from apostolic times to modern times of the priests, religious especially of the laity with inspiring style (SyMM office and Eparchies).

MISSION MONTH PLEDGE

God is my Father. Jesus is my Savior. The Holy Spirit is my Helper. The Holy Church is my Mother. The establishment of God's Kingdom is my goal.

I am proud to be a member of the Syro-Malabar Church, which was founded through the faith proclamation and missionary work of St. Thomas the Apostle. By its very nature, the Church is missionary. The Church exists for evangelization.

I desire to become a missionary filled with zeal and faith.

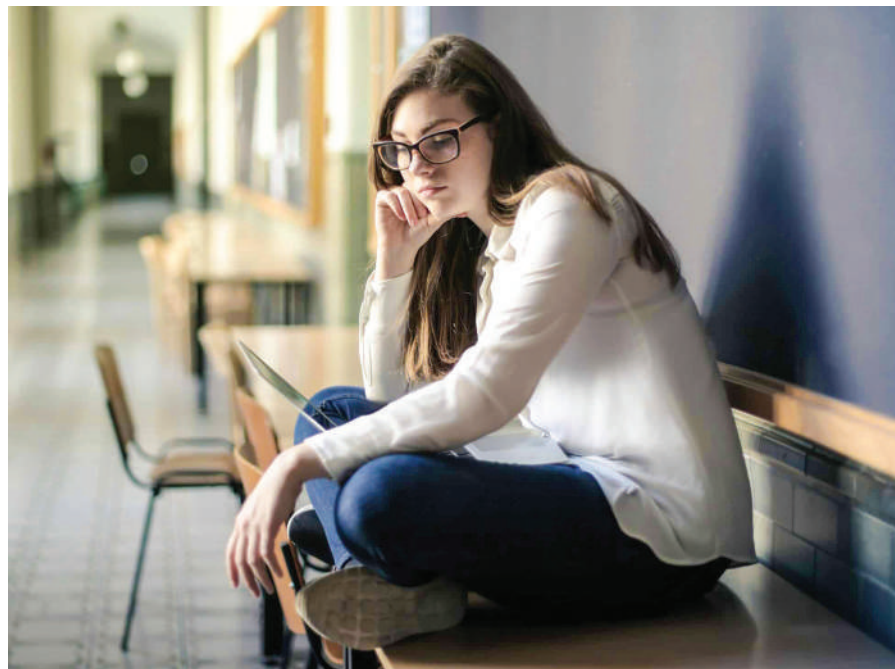
I respect those who serve in the missionary field. I promise to pray for them and to offer whatever help and cooperation I can. I pledge to live for the Gospel together with the Church, and, if necessary, to sacrifice my life for the sake of faith. May God bless me!

SCHIZOID PERSONALITY DISORDER: FACTS



Rev. Dr. Sijon Kuzhikkattumyalil
Consultant Psychologist

Schizoid Personality Disorder is a personality disorder that can cause considerable difficulty for others. People with schizoid personality disorder may sometimes possess exceptional computer skills or have a high level of proficiency in areas such as mathematics and chess. They may also have fairly good jobs. They can be well-liked at the workplace because they go to work regularly, perform their duties precisely, and do not spend time idling or engaging in entertainment. Their characteristic is to carry out tasks accurately and return home. However, they experience difficulty in



adapting to other situations in life.

Main Symptoms

Social isolation: They show little desire to establish close relationships with others, including friends and family members. **Preference for solitude:** Rather than group activities, they show

interest mainly in work and recreational activities that can be undertaken alone. **Emotional detachment:** They generally do not express emotions such as happiness, sadness or anger. **Indifference to criticism and praise:** Whether others praise or criticise them, they generally

show little reaction. Lack of interest in sexual life: They may find it difficult to establish emotional or physical intimacy with a partner.

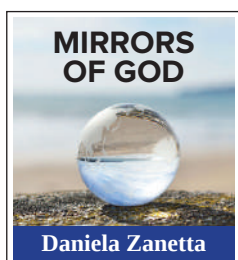
Causes

Genetic factors: Research indicates that people with a family history of schizophrenia or other personality disorders may have a greater likelihood of developing this condition. **Childhood experiences:** Lack of emotional support or attention from parents during childhood may contribute to the development of such disorders. **Brain structure:** Differences may be present in the areas of the brain that regulate emotional and social responses.

Treatment Methods

Since individuals with this condition often do not experience any problems themselves, they are less likely to seek treatment. Nevertheless, the following approaches can be helpful for such patients. **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy:** It helps bring about positive changes in patterns of thinking and behaviour. Similarly, social skills training helps them understand how to interact in social situations. There are no specific medications exclusively for schizoid disorder. However, the assistance of a psychiatrist may be required to reduce depression and anxiety that may occur along with the disorder.

SHE WHO LOVED SUFFERING



Vinayak Nirmal

We all seek many reasons to love life. A comfortable and peaceful life, an atmosphere filled with peace, health, beauty and financial security are generally considered the circumstances that contribute to human happiness. But how can a person be happy and love life when none of these are present? Daniela Zanetta is an answer to this question. Born in 1962 in Maggiora, Italy, she was afflicted with a skin disease from birth. The medical name of her illness was dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa (*epidermolysis bullosa*). The disease caused constant burns and wounds throughout her body. It subjected her to intense pain, lasting for hours every day. Neither the doctors nor the medical science of that time could cure her or even alleviate her suffering. To those who saw her, she could appear frightening. She was aware of this herself. That is why she once wrote: "I may seem frightening when you look at me. But I am not like that." In spite of her pain and illness, she neither complained nor hated Jesus. Her way of expressing herself was to write letters to Jesus. These letters were filled with devotion and love for Christ. One of her letters reads:

"Father, you have entrusted me with this mission and this cross; it is like a



mark imprinted on my body from my very first cry. As though you wanted to make sure that I would not lose my way! I have not always liked this care of yours for me; how many times I have wished to blend into the crowd and become just one among many... Because your love was filled with pain, many sacrifices and bitter experiences, I did not understand it; I could not comprehend it... Finally, with tears, I spoke to you! From that moment, I offered my diseased, wounded and disfigured body to you... I will remain firmly rooted in the centre of your love."

Elsewhere she wrote: "Spending 22 years on the cross is not easy, but I believe in God and love him greatly. I thank him for giving me life, because every new day gives me a new opportunity to love and serve him. What makes me regard suffering as a precious gift from God is not madness, but a tangible experience, often soaked in tears: I am convinced that everything is the fruit of God's will and love. Every day that dawns is a gift from God, and if this life is marked by pain in a special way, it is a double gift, because pain makes us grow, creates a deeper dialogue with God and helps us make reparation for many sins. Fools, stop your absurdities, because life is beautiful."

Who can say that life is beautiful while lying on a sickbed, with the whole body terribly disfigured? How many can say so? Since her body was covered with wounds from birth, even her parents believed that she would not live long. But Daniela lived for 23 years, surpassing all those expectations. Even while in hospital, she focused on consoling others, forgetting her own pain. For those of us who live thinking that our own pain and illness are the greatest, Daniela becomes a wonder. It was not her own suffering but the suffering of others that mattered most to her. She was an outstanding model of Christ. Despite her suffering, she studied well, completed her teacher training, and also served as a catechist and as a member of the folklore movement.

From 26 October 1983 onwards, she began writing letters in which she spoke to Jesus. In her little notebook, she openly recorded all her joys, failures, pains,

fears and hopes. She did not imagine that these writings would become a major testimony to her spiritual life. Christ crucified was at the centre of her spirituality. In a world that viewed illness and suffering as punishments, she sought to unite her sufferings with the cross of Christ. She firmly believed that through the cross she was united with Christ. Even when her loved ones considered euthanasia, she maintained that a life filled with pain still had value. Among those who wished to live and die without pain, she loved pain, without reservation.

By February 1986, her illness had become more severe, and medical science was helpless, unable to do anything further for her. On 10 April, she informed her family that her very small savings should be distributed among the poor. On 13 April, she received Holy Communion. "Thank you, thank you for everything..." These were her final words to everyone before she slipped into a coma. On 14 April 1986, after a life marked by suffering, she departed for heaven to receive the reward for the sufferings she had endured on earth. Her family members unanimously testify that there was a smile on her lips in her final moments. On 17 October 2004, the cause of Daniela's beatification was officially opened. On 23 March 2017, Pope Francis raised her to the rank of Venerable. Daniela, who taught us to love suffering rather than seek escape from it, was truly a marvel. Even if we cannot love our sufferings, let us pray to Daniela for the grace to endure them.

CATHOLIC CONGRESS GLOBAL ORGANIZES BUSINESS CONCLAVE



Kochi: The Global Business Conclave organized by the Global Committee of the Catholic Congress at Monsoon Empress Hotel on 13 September 2026 was inaugurated by His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church. The Major Archbishop stated that the Church becomes relevant in the

world when the faith-based participation of the laity is strengthened in all spheres, including business, politics and various professional fields. He said that it is necessary to identify new areas in keeping with technological development and create an environment where people can grow together through mutual cooperation. The ability

to reach different parts of the world, identify with the local circumstances and enter into entrepreneurial ventures is a sign of growth, the Major Archbishop said.

The conclave was organized with the objectives of promoting mutual cooperation and networking among those engaged in business, introducing

the application of new technologies, including artificial intelligence, in the field, facilitating skill development, women's empowerment and the promotion of start-ups, and providing greater awareness about investment, access to finance and related matters. Global President Mr. Rajeev Kochuparambil presided. Dr. Tessy Thomas, L.

Radhakrishnan IAS, Dr. Josekutty J Ozhukayil, Adv. Tony Punchakunnel, V. V. Augustine, Adv. Biju Parayannilam, Rajesh John, Benny Antony, Treesa Liz Sebastian and Sebastian Varghese addressed the gathering. State Minister for Higher Education Roji M. John, Adv. Dean Kuriakose MP, and business professionals Shaju Thomas, Jo Kuncheria, Biju Joseph, Dr. Alan Thomas, Joy Alukkas, Dr. Ranjith Thomas, Jithin John, Paul Mundadan and Lynette Joseph led various sessions. Panel discussions, seminars, presentations, networking sessions and promotional activities were held. Representatives from different parts of the world participated.

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF ARCHBISHOP MAR JACOB THOOMKUZHY COMMEMORATED



Kozhikode: The first death anniversary of Archbishop Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy, Archbishop Emeritus of the Archeparchy of Thrissur, former bishop of the Eparchies of Mananthavady and Thamarassery, and founder of the Society of *Kristu Dasis* (SKD), was commemorated at the *Kristu Dasis*

Generalate, Kozhikode. His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, the Major Archbishop, presided over the concelebration. Mar George Valiamattam, Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil, Mar Bosco Puthur, Mar Thomas Elavanal, Mar Tony Neelankavil and Mar Jose Porunnedom, together with priests from the

Archeparchy of Thrissur, Eparchies of Mananthavady and Thamarassery, concelebrated the Holy *Qurbana*. During the Holy *Qurbana*, the Major Archbishop delivered the homily in remembrance of Archbishop Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy.

Recalling the life and ministry of Archbishop Mar Jacob

Thoomkuzhy, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil said that his simplicity and farsighted vision had strengthened not only the Eparchies of Thrissur, Thamarassery and Mananthavady, but also the Syro-Malabar Church and society at large, guiding them along new paths of growth. He also noted that

the institutions established by Archbishop Thoomkuzhy in the Archeparchy of Thrissur continue to remain exemplary centres of service at various levels of society.

Bishop Mar Jose Porunnedom of Mananthavady presided over the public meeting held after the Holy *Qurbana*. The Major Archbishop inaugurated the gathering. Bishops Mar Bosco Puthur, Mar Thomas Elavanal MCBS and Mar Tony Neelankavil, Mons. Abraham Vayalil, Protosyncellus of the Eparchy of Thamarassery, the Protosyncellus of the Eparchy of Mananthavady and others addressed the assembly. The first anniversary observances concluded with the fellowship meal.

MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL PILGRIM CENTRE THAZHEKKAD LAUNCHES HOUSING PROJECT FOR HOMELESS



Irinjalakuda: His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil inaugurated the concluding programme of the Year of the Family, observed as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the eparchy, and the inaugural programme of the Year of Mercy at the St. Sebastian's Major Archiepiscopal Pilgrim Shrine Church, Thazhekkad. The meeting was held

after the solemn Holy *Qurbana* celebrated by His Beatitude on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, with Bishop Mar Pauly Kannookadan, Bishop of Irinjalakuda, presiding. Parish trustees who had served during the previous term, presidents of the Family Gathering Central Committee, and parish employees were honoured along

with their spouses. As part of the Year of Mercy, the project "A Home for Those without a Home" has been planned under the guiding motto, "From the Eucharist to Charity." The Family Welfare Fund, Society of St Vincent de Paul, Palliative Care, and Family Gathering Central Committee, which lead charitable activities in the parish, are implementing the project under the leadership of the parish priest and trustees.

MSGR. THOMAS ANIMOOTIL'S EPISCOPAL ORDINATION ON OCTOBER 2

Kottayam: The episcopal ordination of Msgr. Thomas Animoottil, Auxiliary Bishop designate of the Archeparchy of Kottayam will be held on Friday, October 2, 2026, at Christ the King Knanaya Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral, Kottayam. The episcopal ordination ceremony, beginning at 2.15 p.m., will be presided over by Archbishop Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, Archbishop of Kottayam. Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany, Archbishop of Tellicherry, and Archbishop Mar Thomas Tharayil, Archbishop of Changanacherry, will be the co-consecrators. Archbishop

Most Rev. Dr. Varghese Chakkalackal, President of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council and Archbishop of Calicut, will deliver the homily. This will be followed by Holy *Qurbana*, with Mar Thomas Animoottil as the principal celebrant. Archbishop Thomas Mar Koorilos, Archbishop of Thiruvalla and Vice President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, will offer felicitations. Having served in various responsibilities in the Kottayam Archeparchy, Msgr. Thomas Animoottil was serving as Pro-Protosyncellus since 2025 when he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Kottayam Archeparchy.



His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of Syro-Malabar Church, offers the prayers for the eternal repose of the departed Bishop Dr. Abraham Mar Julios, Bishop Emeritus of Muvattupuzha of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, at St. John's Cathedral, Thiruvalla. Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath was also present.

KATHANAR CRICKET LEAGUE FOSTERS FELLOWSHIP; EKAM CROWNED CHAMPIONS



Puthupally: At the Kathanar Cricket League held at the Bails Arena in Puthupally, bringing together priests from various Christian Churches in Kerala, the priests from the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly emerged victorious. In the final against the Kathanar Cricket Club of the Archeparchy of Changanacherry, Ekam chased a target of 52 runs and reached it in 5.3 overs, losing three wickets. Sixteen teams participated

in the tournament, comprising priests from the Syro-Malabar Church, Syro-Malankara Church, Latin Church, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and Mar Thoma Church from the southernmost to the northernmost parts of Kerala, along with deacons from Vadavathoor Seminary as specially invited participants. In the losers' final, the Malabar Fighters of the Archeparchy of Tellicherry defeated the Kottayam Brothers of the Kottayam Archeparchy.

The tournament aimed at fostering friendship through a spirit of sportsmanship. Cardinal Mar George Alencherry inaugurated the tournament, while Mr. Vinu Job MLA was the chief guest. The Kathanar Cricket Club tournament was organized by the priests of the Archeparchy of Changanacherry. Archbishop Mar Thomas Tharayil presented the trophy to the winners.

THE MARIAN PILGRIMAGE OF THE EPARCHY OF IDUKKI CONCLUDES WITH SPIRITUAL FERVOR

Rajakumari: Nearly 25,000 Marian devotees walked towards the high ranges, joining together the beads of prayer and proclaiming their devotion to the Blessed Mother during the sixth Marian pilgrimage of the Eparchy of Idukki. Held as part of the observance of the *Ettu Nombu*, the pilgrimage, led by Bishop Mar John Nellikunnel of Idukki, began at Christ the King Forane Church, Rajakkad, and concluded at Devamatha Church, Rajakumari. A solemn *Qurbana* was celebrated with Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath of the Archeparchy of Thrissur as the principal celebrant. More than a hundred children dressed in



various forms representing the saints stood along the route to welcome the pilgrims, creating a beautiful sight. Despite the unfavourable weather, the faithful covered the nine-kilometre distance in four hours. A *nerchasadya* was also arranged for the pilgrims. Mons. Abraham Purayatt, Mons. Jose Narithookil, co-vicars Fr. Joby Ma-

thalikunnel and Fr. Jain Mattel, Adv. Dean Kuriakose MP, Jose Sauriamakkal, Joshi Tharappel, Sunil Thakarappilly and Shaju Mundakkal led the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage, which began in 2019, has continued to receive a strong response over the past five years, except for one year when it was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR IN KERALA REMARKABLE: K. MURALEEDHARAN

❖ Mar Sleeva Medicity Celebrates Seventh Anniversary



Cherpunkal: The service rendered by the Christian community in Kerala to the healthcare sector is remarkable, and Mar Sleeva Medicity has made a significant contribution to the healthcare sector of Central Kerala, said Health Minister K. Muralaheedharan. He was speaking after inaugurating the Gastro Sciences and Pulmonary Block equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, announcing the Gastro Sciences Centre of Excellence and inaugurating the

gathering of 150 recipients who had successfully undergone kidney transplantation, as part of the seventh anniversary celebrations of Mar Sleeva Medicity.

Bishop Mar Joseph Kallargatt of the Eparchy of Pala presided over the function. Francis George MP delivered the keynote address. The team that completed 150 kidney transplant surgeries was honoured, along with Ciby Varghese, a kidney transplant recipient at Mar Sleeva Medicity who won

the National Transplant Games, and nurse Lity Joy, who safely rescued and brought a pregnant woman to the hospital in an emergency situation. The hospital provides advanced treatment facilities for gastrointestinal diseases in a 30,000-square-foot building. The Gastro Sciences Department is distinguished by its facilities for medical gastroenterology, hepatology, GI and HPB surgery, interventional radiology, advanced ERCP, endoscopic ultrasonography, laparoscopic liver surgery, advanced treatment for complex gastrointestinal cancers, four endoscopy suites, capsule endoscopy, manometry, a dedicated C-arm, Fibro Scan and breath analysis.

NEW APPOINTMENTS



Fr. Antony Lazar OFM, appointed Secretary of KCBC Vigilance Commission



Fr. Michael Pulickal CMI, appointed CBCI Asst. Deputy General Secretary

MEETING OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF CENTRAL KERALA



Munnar: A meeting of Catholic bishops of Central Kerala was held at the Carmel Top Centre, Munnar to discuss pastoral initiatives that can lead the Church, as she enters the third millennium, into deeper spirituality and renewed vitality. Hosted by the Diocese of Vijayapuram, the meeting was attended by 13 bishops from various eparchies. The conference began with a Pontifical *Qurbana* at the Munnar Basilica. Bishop

Rt. Rev. Sylvester Ponnumuthan of Punalur presided over the Holy Mass. Those who participated included Mar Thomas Tharayil, Mar Joseph Kallargatt, Mar George Madathikandathil, Mar Jose Pulickal, Mar John Nellikunnel, Geevarghese Mar Aprem, Bishop Yuhanon Mar Theodosius, Rt. Rev. Sebastian Thekkathecheril, Joshua Mar Ignathios and Mar George Punnakottil, were among the thirteen bishops who attended

SPECIAL PACKAGE NEEDED FOR FLOOD VICTIMS: MAR JOSEPH PAMPLANY



Josegiri: A special package should be announced and implemented without delay for those affected by floods in the high-range regions, and the Archeparchy of Thalassery will always stand with the people of the high ranges who have suffered from the disaster, said Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany of the Archeparchy of Thalassery. He was speaking after inaugurating the distribution of financial assistance provided by the Archeparchy of Thalassery to flood victims at St Augustine's Parish Hall. Mar Pamplany said that the occasion was being used to convey the protest of the people of the high ranges to the government, as no significant follow-up action had been taken on the de-

mand for a special package to rehabilitate the flood-affected areas. A total of ₹ 50 lakh was distributed among 75 applicants from the panchayats of Cherupuzha, Udayagiri and East Eleri. The amount was raised and distributed with the generous cooperation of parishioners from 203 parishes of the Archeparchy of Thalassery. Financial assistance was deposited into the accounts of all eligible persons, irrespective of caste or religion, in proportion to the losses they had suffered. Mons. Mathew Elamthuruthippadavil, Fr. Philip Kaviyil, Fr. Joseph Muttathukunnel, Fr. Philip Iruppakattu, Philip Veliyath, George Thayyil, Sunny Thomas and Sibikkutty Mlamalapathalil spoke on the occasion.



DIARY OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP

FROM 03 SEPTEMBER - 24

September

- **3 Thursday:** Celebrated the *Holy Qurbana* at St. Joseph's Church, Ponnukkara, in the Archeparchy of Trichur, on the occasion of the 25th death anniversary of Msgr. Antony Maliekal.
- **4 Friday:** Celebrated the *Holy Qurbana* at Mary Matha Major Seminary, Trichur.
- **9 Wednesday:** Officiated at the final part of the funeral rites of Rev. Fr. Jose Arangassery of the Archeparchy of Trichur at St. Mary's Church, Ponganamkad.
- **10 Thursday:** Received the new Provincial team of the St. Joseph Province of the ASMI, at Mount St. Thomas.
- **11 Friday:** Received the Global team of the Mission League at Mount St. Thomas.
- **12 Saturday:** Inaugurated the Annual General Assembly of the Syro-Malabar Religious Conference (SMRC) at the CMI Generalate, Kakkanad.
- **13 Sunday:** Inaugurated the Global Business Conclave organised by the Catholic Congress at Ernakulam.
- Celebrated the *Holy Qurbana* at St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly.
- **14 Monday:** Paid homage and offered prayers for the departed soul of Mr. Paul Chennoth, brother of Archbishop Joseph Chennoth, at the residence at Cherthala.
- **17 Thursday:** Celebrated the *Holy Qurbana* on the first death anniversary of His Grace Mar

Jacob Thoomkuzhy at the SKD Generalate, Kozhikode, and inaugurated the public meeting.

- **21 Monday:** Paid homage and offered prayers for the late His Excellency Abraham Mar Julios, Bishop *Emeritus* of Muvattupuzha, at St. John's Cathedral, Thiruvalla.

Inaugurated the ongoing formation programme for priests organised by the Commission for Clergy at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad.

- **23 Wednesday:** Officiated at the final part of the funeral rites of Msgr. Antony Punnassery of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly at St. Augustine's Church, Thuravoor.
- **24 Thursday:** Presided over the public meeting marking the 140th anniversary of *Deepika* at Ernakulam.

WELCOMING 2027, AS FAMILY YEAR IN THE
ARCHEPARCHY OF TELLICHERRY



Chemperi: The Archeparchy of Tellicherry will observe 2027 as the Year of the Family. The decision was taken at the first meeting of the newly constituted 20th Pastoral Council of the Archeparchy. Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany inaugurated the meeting. Mar Pamplany urged the government to take seriously the threat posed by the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA), which could lead to the

displacement of farmers in the state, and to take urgent measures to ensure that farmers do not lose their agricultural land and homes. Mar Joseph Pamplany pointed out that the Pastoral Council has the responsibility not only to address spiritual matters but also to raise the voice of society and bring issues of public concern into the mainstream of public awareness. The Council unanimously

passed a resolution demanding that, as in other states, the ESA designation be restricted to forest areas alone. A total of 249 representatives from various levels were elected to the Pastoral Council of the Archeparchy of Tellicherry for the next three years. Fr. Joseph Muttathukunnel, Chancellor of the Archeparchy, was elected Secretary General of the Pastoral Council, while George Thayyil was elected Secretary.

THE MISSIONARY CHARACTER OF THE KNANAYA
COMMUNITY WILL CONTINUE: MAR MATHEW MOOLAKKATT



Thellakom: The missionary character of the Knanaya community, which bears Christian witness through fellowship and fraternity, will continue, said Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archeparchy of Kottayam. He was speaking after inaugurating the 115th anniversary celebrations at the Archeparchy level at Chaithanya Pastoral Centre, commemorating the establishment of the Kottayam Vicariate on 29 August 1911 by Pope St Pius X through the Apostolic Letter *In Universi Christianae*,

for the Southist community. Mar Moolakkatt also urged the faithful to remain steadfast in their fidelity to God and commitment to the Church, and encouraged everyone to bear witness to the Gospel while firmly preserving the Knanaya heritage. The day's celebrations began with the flag hoisting by Mar Thomas Animoottil, Bishop-elect of the Archeparchy of Kottayam. Mar Joseph Pandarasseril, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archeparchy of Kottayam, delivered the welcome address. Fr. Mathew Manackatt, Pas-

toral Coordinator, presented a brief report on the pastoral activities carried out since the previous Archeparchy Day. Auxiliary Bishop Geevarghese Mar Aprem, members of the Curia, Forane Vicars, priests of the Archeparchy, representatives of the councils of consecrated communities, members of the Pastoral Council, central and regional office-bearers of community and devotional organisations, and representatives from parishes participated in the celebrations.

THRISSUR PASTORAL COUNCIL
DRAWS UP ACTION PLAN FOR AN
ELDER-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT



Thrissur: The Pastoral Council meeting decided to formulate action plans, from the family fellowship level to the Archeparchy level, to ensure senior citizens a later stage of life marked by freedom and dignity. The discussion on the topic "Possibilities and Challenges in Elderly Care" was led by Mar Tony Neelankavil, Dr. Siju Jose Koonan and Dr. Peter M Raj. The Pastoral Council of the Archeparchy of Thrissur

expressed its support for the *Thoofan* project, which is leading the fight against substance abuse. The Archeparchy Pastoral Council also demanded that follow-up discussions at the government level be initiated urgently regarding the effective implementation of the Justice J. B. Koshy Commission Report, aimed at addressing the backwardness of the Christian community in the state.

CBCI ECUMENICAL MEETING
CALLS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Bengaluru: A joint meeting of the National Ecumenical Bishops' Fellowship (NEBF) and the National Federation of Churches of India (NFCI) was held on September 18, 2026, at St John's National Academy of Health Sciences, Bengaluru, in connection with the concluding session of the CBCI Standing Committee meeting. CBCI President Cardinal Anthony Poola inaugurated the meeting. Bishop Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, Chairman of the CBCI Desk for Ecumenism and Convener of the NFCI, delivered the concluding message. Archbishops, bishops, heads of Churches, and other representatives from various Christian Churches in India participated in the meeting. The National Federation

of Churches of India is a national platform that brings together Churches belonging to various Christian traditions in India. The Federation was formed at the fourth meeting of the NEBF held on May 8, 2026. The meeting discussed various issues, including the 2026 FCRA Amendment Bill, violence against Christians, laws relating to religious conversion in different states, the rights of Churches and their institutions, issues concerning foreign contributions, and the constitutional rights and equal status of Dalit Christians. CBCI Deputy Secretary General Fr. Matthew Koyickal and CBCI Desk for Ecumenism Secretary Fr. Antoniraj Thumma led the meeting.



CHANDA MISSION

"SECOND SPRING" OF THE SYRO MALABAR CHURCH



Bishops of Eparchy of Chanda



Bp. Januarius Palathuruthy CMI

Motto: Sambhajemahi Dhivyani

"Let us share everything
dynamically divine"

03.05.1977



Bp. Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI

Motto: Vishwa Kutumb

"Universal Family"

03.07.1990



Bp. Ephrem Nariculam

Motto: Tava Rajyam Ayatu

"Thy Kingdom Come"

24.10.2014



Chanda is the first *Ad Gentes* Mission entrusted to the Syro Malabar Church. It came into existence on March 31, 1962. The territory consisted of the three civil districts of Chanda, Wardha and Adilabad, which were separated from the archdiocese of Nagpur and entrusted to the care of the CMI (Carmelites of Mary Immaculate) congregation. Msgr Januarius Palathuruthy CMI was appointed the Mission Superior. Chanda became an exarchate in 1968, and an eparchy in 1977. Msgr Januarius was himself appointed the first bishop. Mar Januarius was succeeded by Mar Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI who until then was one among the pioneering Chanda Missionaries. The diocese was bifurcated in 1999: Adilabad district, the Telugu speaking area, became an independent eparchy with Mar Joseph Kunnath CMI as the first bishop. Mar Vijay Anand retired in 2014, and was succeeded by Mar Ephrem Nariculam, the present head of the Chanda Mission.

Chanda faces extreme climates, with summer temperatures reaching 48–50°C and monsoon floods causing road blockades. The vast majority are poor peasants struggling daily, plagued by drought and regular crop failures. Villages are largely surrounded by forests, facing constant threats from tigers, leopards, bears, bison, deer, and wild boars. Remote stations are often cut off by power outages, poor internet, and a lack of basic healthcare and education. Among the 52 Mission Centres, 35 are located in these isolated, forest-surrounded areas with minimal transport and difficult access to towns. Early missionaries focused on the all-round development of this underdeveloped region, reaching remote areas with education and healthcare. They effectively worked on developing agricultural fields, building water bodies, sinking wells, and constructing approach roads. Rural dispensaries and bal bhavans were established for children's schooling and formation. As the gospel was preached within their concrete life situations,

people responded enthusiastically, forming small indigenous communities across the Telangana-Vidarbha border. Embracing the Second Vatican Council's spirit, the Mission also engaged in dialogue with other societal leaders in a territory that is the karmabhumi of Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj, and Baba Amte.

Mar Januarius, the visionary architect of the first Syro Malabar Mission, encapsulated his vision for the mission and its methodology in Sanskrit as Sambhajemahi divyani, meaning, "Let us share everything that is dynamically divine". The "Seven-Point Program" of Mar Januarius helped in enkindling and nurturing the Christian faith among the newly born communities. Accompanying the people in their daily struggles, the Mission has maintained from the beginning its methodology of "Peripheries-to-the-Centre" as far as the development of the area is concerned. With the establishment of so many bal bhavans for the overall development of the children, their parents were also reached and made part of the comprehensive developmental programme.

Mar Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI, the second bishop established the diocesan minor

seminary. This move facilitated the availability of many diocesan priests, including those from the new Catholic communities of Chanda. Many other institutions – like Kala Bhavan (for the Catholic children to be trained in arts and music along with the formal school education), Loksamgraha Social Service Society (the umbrella platform for the various social service programmes which were already going on in the diocese) under the aegis of the Social Work department, Christ Hospital, a multi-speciality Hospital in the heart of Chandrapur City, and many educational institutions in villages and small towns – also came into existence which gave a better frame work and stability for the various services the Mission has so far been engaged in. These were all initiatives to consolidate the fruits of the missionary endeavours with a futuristic vision. He guided the Mission for almost a quarter of a century with the motto, Vishwa Kutumbam," meaning "Universal Family." With the mindset of a radical missionary, he tried to build bridges with the different sections of the society, especially imbibing the spirit of the vasudhaiva kutumbakam, which inspired him to champion the cause of a "Zero Budget Natural Farming."



It was in 2014 that Mar Ephrem, assumed the office as the third shepherd of Chanda. His motto has been: “To continue the mission of Christ in building up God's Kingdom on earth.” Having been well acquainted with the policies and programmes of the Mission from its beginning, Mar Ephrem who had earlier spent many years as a formator in the diocese's minor seminary, felt quite at home in the new office from the beginning.

The “Talent Club,” is aimed at equipping the young generation with techniques and skills for a brighter future. Reading the signs of the times, he has been championing the cause of an eco-friendly environment, especially initiating green projects at Lakkadkot and Mul. Kiranoday Enterprises, a unit of a bakery, a tailoring centre, etc are some new initiatives for the self-support of

the Mission. “Jeevotsav,” a parish level renewal programme was begun for the ongoing faith formation and continued pastoral nourishment of the local communities. A new Pastoral Plan (2019-2033) has been implemented to take the Mission forward with vigour and vitality.

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

The Lord blessed the efforts of his missionaries abundantly with the emergence of believing communities, and many institutions in the service of the people, especially those on the peripheries of the society. The growth of the first Syro Malabar Mission was so fast and phenomenal that Archbishop Eugene D'Souza (who, as the archbishop of Nagpur, was instrumental in welcoming the first Syro Malabar missionaries to the vast uncommitted areas of

Nagpur) once after a tour of the entire area, exclaimed: “The desert has bloomed and blossomed!”

These are challenging and trying times for the Indian Church as a whole. Chanda Mission which is part of the Maharashtra State, is no exception. The Mission looks forward to welcoming more and more Spirit-filled missionaries and lay leaders to continue the works initiated by the pioneers. May St Thomas, the Apostle, father of the Indian Church and also the patron of the Chanda Mission, inspire us to bear witness to the One Whom he acknowledged as “My Lord and My God.” Chanda, which in the beginning did not have anyone else as a model to imitate or to compete with, continues to be a challenge of the time!

CHANDA DIOCESE AT A GLANCE

St. Thomas the Apostle, Our Heavenly Patron

"You are my witnesses" Acts 1:8

1 PEOPLE AND PASTORAL LIFE	2 EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS FORMATION	3 SOCIAL MISSION AND APOSTOLATES
Patron : St. Thomas the Apostle	Schools : 47	Retreat Centres : 02
Area : 82,289 Sq. km.	Convents : 82	Balbhavan : 15
Parishes & Mission : 52	Religious House of men : 15	Social work centres : 05
Diocesan Priests : 67	Congregations serving in the diocese (women) : 26	Direct act of mercy institutions : 04
Religious Priest : 50	Men Congregations : 05	Hospitals : 04
Religious Brothers : 06	Provincial Houses (men) : 01	Dispensaries : 04
Religious Sisters : 480	Houses of provincial & Regional Superiors : 07	B. Ed College : 01
Priests & religious men from the Diocese : 31	Formation Houses : 07	Technical Institutes : 01
Religious Sisters from the Diocese : 120	Major seminaries : 02	Perpetual Adoration Centres : 04
Catechists : 14		
Seminarians : 24		
Civil Districts : 10		
Languages : Marathi, Hindi, Telugu & Tribal languages		

Communion | Mission | Service | Hope

Faith in the People
Hope for the Future



Handing over the Chanda Mission to the CMI Congregation (15 August 1962)

Symbols of Christian Family

1. Cross of Christ

2. Picture of Christ

3. Bible

4. Lamp

5. Communitarian Prayer

6. Unconditional Forgiveness

7. Sharing what we earn with our needy neighbour

These four symbols should be installed and enthroned in the family with some solemnity. Everyday evening at sunset family members gather together, light the lamp and say the family prayers.

Seven-Point Programme of Bp. Januarius CMI an Initiative to Promote Christian Faith



Leprosy Eradication Programme in Gadchiroli District



Bp. Ephrem on Pastoral Visit (Shengaoon)



Bp. Ephrem's Visit to Village and Families



Bp. Vijayanand Nedumpuram CMI on Mission Visit



Bp. Januarius Palathuruthy CMI with a Village Family (Ettapalli)



Annual Meet of Western Region Bishops Council in Chanda (08-09-2025)

PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY IN ROME FOR CATHOLIC CONGRESS GLOBAL MEET

❖ Special Audience with Pope Leo XIV ❖ Major Archbishop will Participate



Rome: The Catholic Congress Global Meet will be held from October 20 to 23 at the Maria Mater Ecclesiae Major Seminary in Rome. On the morning of October 22, Pope Leo XIV will meet the participants of the gathering at a special audience in the Vatican. The Global Meet in Rome will be a memorable gathering in the history of the Syro-Malabar Church and the Catholic Congress, which has a 109-year legacy of service. The gathering will feature sessions, discussions, dialogues, and pol-

icy deliberations focusing on various dimensions of community empowerment at the global level, challenges and opportunities, global connectivity, business networking, and related areas. His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop, His Eminence Cardinal Claudio Gugerotti, the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, Bishop Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil, the Bishop-Legate of the Catholic Congress, other bishops, community leaders, and representatives of the Sy-

ro-Malabar community from 40 countries around the world will participate.

Ahead of the Global Meet, the flag handed over by His Beatitude to Rajeev Kochuparambil, the Catholic Congress President, is currently being carried through 32 countries. After travelling through various countries in the Middle East, Canada, the USA, Australia, the Far East, Europe, and Africa, the flag will reach India. During October, it will travel through various eparchies in India before proceeding to Rome on October 18. The flag will be hoisted in Rome on October 19. Preparations are progressing to make the Global Meet a landmark event.

NEW VATICAN DOCTRINAL NOTE ON INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE



Vatican City: On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council declaration on the Church's relation with non-Christian religions, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Dicastery for Pro-

moting Christian Unity, and the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue jointly published a new Note on September 16, 2026, entitled *A Journey of Hope: Sixty Years of Interreligious Dialogue and Fraternity in the Light of the Conciliar Declaration Nos-*

tra Aetate. The document places renewed emphasis on interreligious dialogue, fraternity, and peace.

Reviewing the experience of six decades of interreligious dialogue, the new Note points out that the message of *Nos-*

tra Aetate remains relevant in today's world. At a time when war, religious fundamentalism, violence, polarisation, narrow-mindedness, and religious discrimination are on the rise, the document states that interreligious dialogue is essential for fostering mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

The Vatican also sets out a clear position against hatred and terrorism. It observes that terrorism and violence perpetrated in the name of religion constitute an affront to humanity's very search for God. The new Note recalls that genuine

respect for other religions begins with respect for religious freedom. It particularly stresses that the right of Christians living as minorities to freely practise their faith must be protected. The Vatican therefore calls for the development of "a pedagogy of dialogue."

The title *A Journey of Hope* itself conveys the fundamental message of the document. The Vatican calls for the journey that began with *Nostra Aetate* sixty years ago to be understood not merely as a historical memory, but as an ongoing mission to foster peace, fraternity, religious freedom, and mutual respect in today's divided and conflict-ridden world.

BISHOPS ARE CALLED TO SERVE WITH A MISSIONARY HEART: POPE LEO

Vatican: Bishops are called to remain with Jesus, to acquire the heart of Jesus the Good Shepherd and to carry out their ministry with a missionary heart, said Pope Leo XIV. The Pope was speaking during a meeting on September 10 with participants in a formation programme organized for newly ordained bishops under the joint auspices of the Dicastery for Bishops, the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches and the Dicastery for Evangelization. The Holy Father said that the days of formation, during which the bishops prayed together, celebrated the Holy *Qurbana* and shared their hopes and dreams,



had enabled them to experience the truth that no bishop is alone in his ministry. Bishops must remain constantly with Jesus through the Holy *Qurbana*, the reading of the Word of God and prayer. The Pope stated that ministry becomes more peaceful, free and fruitful when the heart remains close to the Lord.

Having acquired the heart of Jesus the Good Shepherd, bishops should serve the people with love. They should know the names and life stories of the faithful, share in their joys and sorrows, visit their homes and pray with them. The Pope also urged bishops to receive priests with the love of a father and a

brother, listen to them, encourage them and pray for them. He reminded them that caring for the human person is a major challenge in an age of rapidly changing technology and artificial intelligence, and called on bishops to work for a civilization of dialogue and love.

A total of 147 newly ordained bishops from various countries around the world participated in the formation programme held in the Vatican from 2 to 10 September, 2026. Bishop Mar Joseph Thachaparambath CMI of Adilabad and Bishop Mar James Patteril CMF of Belthangady participated from the Syro-Malabar Church.

MARTYRS FULLY REFLECT THE LIGHT OF CHRIST: POPE LEO XIV

Rome: Pope Leo XIV said that martyrs help the Church to reflect more fully the light of Christ the Lord and show humanity today the path towards a culture of love. The Pope delivered the message on September 16, the concluding day of a seminar commemorating the

new martyrs of the 21st century, organized by the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints at the Augustinianism Patristic Institute in Rome. The witness of faith of martyrs who gave their lives for the Gospel is not an ideology, but a testimony to a faith lived in daily life. There are still many

martyrs who have not been officially recognized by the Church. It was with the aim of gathering information about their lives and witness of faith that Pope Francis established the Commission for the New Martyrs in 2023. Martyrs are brothers and sisters who have given their lives for the Gospel in diverse

geographical, historical, and political circumstances. In an age dominated by a culture of power, unlimited force, and the continuous development of armed systems, the heroic lives of these new witnesses to the faith offer a model for the Church, Pope Leo stated. He also quoted Pope St Paul VI, who said that the

evangelical witness of the new martyrs is a great inspiration for the Church in proclaiming the Gospel in today's world. This witness is rooted in consistency between words and actions. The Pope said that martyrs are honoured as stars shining amid the darkness of selfishness and oppression.